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825 Sometimes a dead person who was not sufficiently mourned has on account of this been unable to find the route to the river Endam, and he comes back in the shape of a black antelope to get himself killed so as to die a second time and be sure to arrive at the village of the dead.

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829 Europeans, on account of their pale look, their long, smooth hair, and above all because of the material goods they have brought, are still regarded as dead Pahouin who have returned to their country, and the fear of the children who rush to hide from the sight of a white man in many villages is due to the legends told by the old people who thus describe us.

V. First Reactions to Material Inferiority

556 The access of the Fang to the traditional trade regions has
441 had great consequences. What started out as a conquering and
"colonizing" undertaking has imperceptibly changed into a search
for manufactured "riches" (bium) and [157] competition for trade
routes and trade centers. The quest for "merchandise" is the pri-
[42] mary male activity and sets in motion the machinery of war and
witchcraft.

829 The legends which we know stress the attraction of the West
773 as the country of white men who have all riches at their disposal.
One of these told by V. Largeau suggests the importance of access
to these trade zones:

"We arrive at last at the N'Tem and the Ogooué where we
meet those who distribute riches . . . they give us everything, we
become rich." (1)

1. Op. cit., article: Instruction.

The legendary texts, collected by Father Trilles under the
title "Noirs et Blancs [The Blacks and the Whites]" are particular-
ly significant. A predominant place is given to the theme of
wealth, held only by the white men. Wealth has escaped the
black men — because of a lack of technique and because of an
attitude of abandoning rather than dominating the world, (2) or

2. "Proverbes, Légendes et Contes
Fang [Fang Proverbs, Legends, and
Tales], " op. cit., and especially
"Noirs et Blancs [Blacks and Whites]"
and "Légende du Nsas [Legend of the
Nsas]."

has been stolen from them. (3) The whites apparently represent

3. "Legend of Bingo"; and "In order
to seize his treasures (from the hero

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Bingo) and possess his secret, they killed him and took the green stone, the green stone he would have left us. Since then men from beyond the mountains possess the riches of the earth, but we have kept the laws of Bingo. . . ."

wealth, they are *mitāgō*, those who count. They have even been proclaimed by mythology. They have the physical appearance of ghosts, and they have at their disposal all the goods accumulated in the country of the ancestors. One can see therefore the powerful impression made by the arrival of the white man who was rich in merchandise, and the value, reinforced by the whole meaning of the myth, placed on this wealth. At the time of the clan regrouping movement, certain teachings in the form of question and answer continued to associate the two terms, power of the white man's example and pursuit of riches:

--What life should we lead?

--We should lead the European life.

--What is the example we should give to lead the European life?

--We should work in order to earn money. . . ." (4)

4. *Cahier des réunions* [Notebook of Gatherings], Yémisèm of Oyem.

At the beginning of this chapter we stressed the attraction of the economically strong centers -- the coast, the Lower Ogooué, Spanish Guinea. A map of the migrations makes [158] them appear like meeting points. At first the Fang settled in the outskirts of these centers or attracted the trading stations to themselves with a feeling of real appropriation. Du Chaillu and Cureau observed this phenomenon, the former by showing how "having become the white man of such-and-such a chief, " he "obtained well-being and security" but was obliged to give

44/ presents." (1) The latter analyzed the Ogooué commerce which was

1. Voyages et Aventures dans l'Afrique Equatoriale [Travels and Adventures in Equatorial Africa], pp. 106 and 120.

"under the thumb of the Fang population": "Firms were obliged to maintain their establishments in definite localities and were forbidden under threat of hostilities to move them upstream. The European agent was respected; far from being disturbed, their stores were strictly protected by the village warriors. The merchant was a prisoner of the population; he found himself invested with a monopoly." (2)

2. Op. cit., pp. 294-295.

44/ The first government reports continue to note, like Du
556 Chaillu, the desire of each large grouping to have a trading post
829 for itself; once satisfied they would relax and be submissive." (3)

3. Rapport annuel de 1907 [Annual Report of 1907], Archives of Gabon.

This behavior is not explained by the single economic anxiety to reserve for themselves a monopoly and to have at hand the possibility of bartering. To have a trading station in contact with the village itself is to have reached the end of migrations westward which were to lead to the source of wealth; it is to participate constantly in this wealth and to have the certainty of a superior life. To enter into relations with the white man, who appears both as an "eldest son" and more than a human being with his riches and knowledge of riches, this is to participate in a circuit of power and fecundity, and to transcend a somehow cursed existence in order to attain the "true life."

829 On the other hand, the legends show how, in contact with
773 technical manifestations and European enterprise, the Fang very

829 soon developed a feeling of subjection and inferiority in wisdom
773 and riches. This is attributed to a decision of Nzamō (God), to a
veritable curse. A text collected by Largeau mentions two chil-
dren of Nazmō — Ekouagha (subjected) and Ndan'gho (ruler) —
and the wishes expressed for each of these:

For Ndan'gho, the father says: "Riches! authority! wisdom!"
[159] He adds: "All these things are in yourself!" Again he
says: "You will beget white children." For Ekouagha, he cries
out: "Alas! my other son has taken everything with the fortune ...
There are no riches left for you ... you will beget black men ...
you will be miserable..." (1) This is a theme comparable to that

1. Op. cit., article, Instruction.

of the "Legend of the Nsas" given by Father Trilles, in which
Nazmō [sic] ends by saying: "You, black man, rise and go and
find your wives and populate the earth ... you will always remain
naked as now ... You, white man, you will be rich, richer even
than you were in your dream. You, the white man, will always be
the white man, the black man will always be the black man, the
white man will always be rich, the black man always poor..." (2)

2. Op. cit., Légende du Nsas
[Legend of Nsas].

829 The curse motif indicates the effective potentialities attached
773 to imported riches and their acquisition. Also there appears per-
177 haps the first awareness of the racial question and above all a
technical insufficiency allied to a social organization that is wholly
preoccupied with the production of human beings, (in the legend
quoted, "go and find your wives and populate the earth" is part of
the curse). The illusion of direct participation in riches was
quickly destroyed, and the ascendancy of the agents of coloniza-
tion became more specific and more complete. The theme of the
curse attached to the race shows the extent of the deception. It
is no longer possible to return to methods of violence. Witchcraft
techniques then increase in number; recourse is had to knowledge
revealed during fits brought on by the absorption of certain forms

829 of strychnine, and the idea, borrowed from Christianity, of a
713 better life after death becomes more specific. The effort at
177 adaptation dealt first with religious and magical techniques; in
these fields much was borrowed from neighboring peoples (for
example, the Bwiti cult of which we will speak later); customs
are altered not in order to assimilate for purposes of conquest but
simply for means of defense. The Fang people, reduced to a state
of unemployed conquerors, lose the essential part of their moral
strength. As we will show in the next chapter the Fang are one
of those peoples that have most keenly suffered from crises due to
the colonial situation and one of those that have reacted most to
this threat.